

The Media Centre celebrates 21st birthday



The Media Centre, the not-for-profit organisation providing office space and support for digital and creative businesses, celebrates its 21st year in business this month.

Clients, directors and friends of the organisation were invited to a small gathering, involving fizz and cake, to mark the anniversary.

Since the doors of the Northumberland Street building opened in 1995, The Media Centre has acted as a base to over 1,200 businesses. But there have been a number of key milestones along the way, as the organisation has expanded its office space and services.

Just six years after opening, the Lord Street offices were unveiled, and in 2002, a partnership with 'Places for People' was launched to provide 21 work-live spaces for people in the creative and media sectors.

In 2007, the iconic glass building situated on Friendly Street was opened by the Queen, shortly followed by the introduction of co-working spaces in 2009.

Brent Woods, CEO of The Media Centre, recalls: "When Northumberland Street opened, only one half of the building work was completed and it started with just 15 tenants.

"But we've gradually added more office space to accommodate start-up companies since the digital and creative industries began to thrive."

One of the first companies to rent from The Media Centre in 1995, Nicci Topping Casting, is still a client today.

Nicci Topping, commenting on her reasons for choosing The Media Centre, said: "As a start-up, I was determined to be based in my home town, rather than London – which is generally the norm for casting companies.

"The Media Centre stood out to me because they offered a mentoring scheme to help my company to grow. Although I now also have satellite offices in London and Manchester, my headquarters are still at The Media Centre – it's great to be amongst the many other inspiring businesses that are based here."

In 2015, The Media Centre achieved its highest ever occupancy rate and is currently 'home' to over 200 companies. But the organisation offers more to the business community than just office space – it also encourages collaboration and networking between its clients and the wider region.

Brent continued: "By locating a high density of businesses within close proximity to each other, we've created an organically supportive system where peer learning, increased competitiveness and productivity start to happen naturally.

"By designing collaborative work spaces, networking events and business programmes, we are able to amplify the benefit to those that wish to participate."

And as The Media Centre looks to the future, it intends to continue to support the development of the creative and digital sectors within Kirklees – now the fastest growing sectors in the region, which employ more than 5,000 people and contribute £100m to the local economy.

Brent finished: "New technology and approaches to flexible working are changing the way employers get the best out of their teams and we aim to adapt quickly to those changes."